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Why Not Jim?

Helen F. Bagg

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WHY NOT JIM?

A Farce in One Act

BY

HELEN F. BAGG

Author of "THE SUPERIOR SEX," "IF MORNING GLORY WINS," etc.

PHILADELPHIA
THE PENN PUBLISHING COMPANY
1911

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Why Not Jim?

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Why Not Jim?

CHARACTERS

MRS. GORDON . *A widow and the mother of her daughters*
PAULA HARMON . *Her daughter, who won't be a widow much longer*
EDNA FRASER . . . *Her second daughter, wife of a literary man*
VIVIAN GORDON . *The youngest daughter, but old enough to "take notice"*
GERTRUDE PRICE . *Fraser's secretary, and a determined young person*
ALICE . . . . . *A maid*
ALEC FRASER . . . *A young author, married to Edna*
CHARLES RAMSAY . . *A friend of the family, who is responsible for "Jim"*
JAMES BARRY . *A friend of Charles, who is willing to do a lot for Vivian*

TIME:—The present. SCENE:—Mrs. Gordon's summer home.

TIME OF PLAYING:—One hour and a half.

STORY OF THE PLAY

One of Miss Bagg's exceptionally clever comedies. Like "His Model Wife," and "Untangling Tony," it offers good opportunities for fun-making to nearly every member of the cast. Mrs. Gordon has secured as the chief attraction for her garden party "Count Cashmere," a famous palmist and fortune-teller. He sends word that he is ill. Alec Fraser, who is Mrs. Gordon's son-in-law, and Charles Ramsay, who hopes to be, induce Jim Barry, a young millionaire and a stranger, to impersonate the Count. He imposes on all the ladies except Gertrude, Fraser's secretary, who thinks the so-called Count is a burglar. Fraser and Ramsay try to save the situation by capturing "the burglar," removing his disguise, and bringing him back as the millionaire. Gertrude exposes them, but Barry agrees to still play the part of palmist at the garden party, and the conspirators are forgiven.

COSTUMES

Mrs. Gordon. A lady of fifty-five to sixty. Handsome afternoon indoor gown, with change to evening costume.

Paula. A widow of twenty-seven. Not in mourning. Handsome afternoon gown, with change to evening costume. Carries garden hat at first entrance.

Edna. About twenty-five; dresses well, but not quite so dashingly as Paula.

Gertrude. Twenty to twenty-five, good-looking, plain but very trim in dress, luxuriant in manner.

Vivian. Eighteen. Wears short, white gown, and a big garden hat; change to simple evening gown. A long series of snubs from older sisters has given her an aggressive manner, but she is very attractive.

Alice. Maid's costume; black dress, cap, apron.

Fraser. Tall, rather indolent in manner, good-natured, humorous. Business suit, with change to evening dress.

Ramsay. Thirty. Wears motoring costume at first entrance; afterward, evening dress.

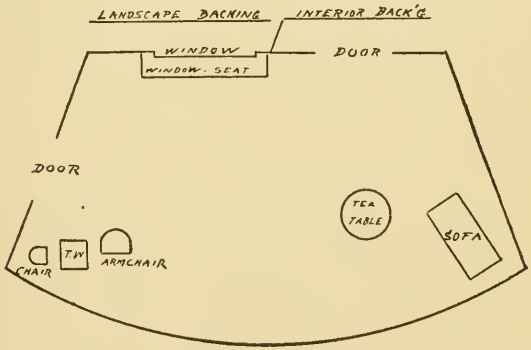
Barry. About twenty-eight. The lines of the play

describe him as rather short and stout, but this may be altered to describe the person taking the part. He would better not be tall, however. Dresses rather loudly in afternoon suit, afterward in evening dress. On first entrance disguised with wig and beard or mustache, and slightly darkened face. Disguise must be such that it may be removed quickly. He wears a ring with large stone.

PROPERTIES

Basket of flowers, vases, handkerchief for EDNA; typewriter machine and paper for GERTRUDE; cigarette for FRASER; handkerchief, letter, for MRS. GORDON; suit-case for BARRY; tea-tray, cups and saucers, etc., for ALICE; ash-tray and paper-cutter, curtain-rope, for PAULA; handkerchief for RAMSAY.

SCENE PLOT



Drawing-room of Mrs. Gordon's summer home. Entrance at R., and by wide door with portières, L. C. Wide window (may be bow window) and window seat at C. Down L., sofa. Down L. C., tea-table, ready to serve tea. Down R., small stand with typewriter on it; near it a small chair and a large armchair. Other chairs and furnishings to suit taste.

Why Not Jim?

SCENE.—*Drawing-room of* MRS. GORDON'S *summer home, a few miles from New York.* GERTRUDE PRICE *sits at typewriter writing. Near her, in a very comfortable armchair, sits* ALEC FRASER, *cigarette in mouth, dictating.*

FRASER. Would you mind reading that last bit over? From the place where Clare comes into the library and sees Henry?

GERTRUDE (*reading in a brisk, businesslike way*). "She came to him, softly, and touched him on the shoulder. 'Darling,' she said, her voice trembling; 'Darling.' He turned and caught her in his arms."

FRASER. Thanks. How does that strike you?

GERTRUDE. It strikes me that it's the fourth time in two chapters that he's caught her in his arms, and the seventh time she's called him darling.

(*She refers to the manuscript.*)

FRASER. Well, change it—wait—hang it all, he's got to grab her here. He would, you know.

GERTRUDE. You might have him kiss her hand one of the other times. He hasn't done that yet.

FRASER (*with a grimace*). H'm. Where's the thing going?

GERTRUDE. To the "Ladies' Fireside Friend." They wrote you the other day, you know.

FRASER. Oh, well, let him kiss her hand. I don't care. (*Dictates.*) "Clare," he murmured, "Clare ——" (*Knock at the door.*) Well?

VOICE. It's Edna. May I come in?

FRASER. Certainly.

(*Enter* EDNA FRASER, L., *a pretty little woman, with a basket of flowers in her arms. She frowns when she sees* GERTRUDE, *and pauses in the doorway.*)

EDNA. I suppose I'm interrupting your work?

FRASER (*resignedly*). I guess we've worked long enough, anyhow. Miss Gertrude, you'd better go for a walk and get some fresh air. We'll finish the yarn to-morrow. (GERTRUDE *gathers up the manuscript, all except the sheet that is on the machine, and goes out* R. EDNA *goes to the table and arranges her flowers in the vases.*) Edna, if we come here next summer, I am going to build a studio on the grounds somewhere. I haven't had a single hour of uninterrupted work since we've been here.

EDNA (*on the verge of tears*). I'm sure I ——

FRASER (*crossing to her*). My darling, I'm not finding fault with you—it's the whole family. It's your mother, and Paula, and Vivian, and Charles Ramsay—the whole lot of you. You simply won't leave a chap alone.

EDNA. I don't consider that you're alone when you're shut up here with that girl.

FRASER. Who? Gertrude? But she's helping me with my work. You're surely not jealous of Gertrude?

EDNA. Of course I'm not. I—I think you're very unkind.

FRASER (*taking her in his arms*). Then why will you be such a little goose about her? You know what a help she is to me; and you know that there isn't a woman on earth whose little finger I care the least thing about, except yourself.

EDNA. But I want to be everything to you. I want to —well—to inspire you. Why can't I learn to run that thing? (*Points to typewriter.*)

FRASER. Well, for one thing, my darling, you can't spell. No woman who habitually puts two "p's" in develope, and one "r" in interrupt, can be everything to me; at least, not till the phonetic method becomes more popular than it is now.

EDNA. Oh!

FRASER. And I'd rather get my inspiration in the orthodox way, if you don't mind. A woman who insisted upon inspiring one all the time would be an awful bore to live with, in my opinion.

EDNA. Really?

FRASER (*kissing her*). Really. Am I forgiven?

EDNA. Yes. (*Crosses to typewriter, takes the sheet off.*) Did I interrupt you very badly this afternoon?

FRASER. Well, truth compels me ——

EDNA (*reading*). "She came to him softly." Silly, your women always come softly. Do they wear rubber heels, or are they all—cats?

FRASER (*starting after her*). You little wretch ——

(*She laughs and runs away from him; he follows, and just as he catches her,* VIVIAN GORDON *enters* L. C.)

EDNA (*seeing* VIVIAN, *and objecting to being caught romping*). Alec, stop! Here's Vivian!

VIVIAN (*in a bored tone*). Oh, don't mind me; I'm getting used to it. So used to it that when my turn comes I dare say I shan't care for it at all. Where's tea?

EDNA. It isn't tea time yet. Alec, I insist upon your letting me go.

FRASER (*releasing her, but capturing the paper*). Hungry already, kid?

VIVIAN (*sitting down and taking off her hat*). Ravenous. I've been helping mamma with the last preparations for the lawn fête to-morrow. I've found out what her great surprise is to be. I made her tell me. She hadn't told anybody but Charles.

EDNA. What?

VIVIAN. She's engaged the celebrated palmist, Count Cashmere, to come down and read the guests' palms. How's that for mother? Won't it make all the other women sick?

EDNA. Not really? Count Cashmere—coming down from New York? Why, it must have cost tremendously. He has appointments weeks ahead. He's been the rage of the season.

FRASER. The fraud of the season!

VIVIAN. He's not a fraud. He's a wonderful palmist.

FRASER. Humph!

EDNA. He tells you the most extraordinary things, and they all come true. They say that his books are full for weeks and weeks.

FRASER. I don't doubt that. I'll bet seven-eighths of his victims are women.

VIVIAN (*scornfully*). Victims! He told Ethel Vandeveer that she was on the brink of something great happening to her; and the next night—the very next night—Freddy Harrington proposed to her!

FRASER. Oh, well, if you call Freddy Harrington something great ——

VIVIAN. The Count's coming to-night and going to stay over the lawn fête. Do you suppose, if we're awfully nice to him, he'll read our hands to-night?

FRASER. Bah!

EDNA. He might. I wonder ——

(*Enter* MRS. GORDON, R., *letter in hand, handkerchief to her eyes.*)

MRS. G. Oh, oh, oh!

EDNA. Gracious, mamma, what's the matter?

(*They all run to her.*)

MRS. G. (*dropping into chair*). He's not coming!

FRASER. Who?

MRS. G. He. The Count. He's not coming. My lawn fête is ruined.

FRASER. Humph!

(*Goes up stage in disgust, stands at the window, hands in pockets.*)

VIVIAN. But you said only half an hour ago ——

MRS. G. His secretary telephoned—he thinks he's got the grippe—he can't come.

EDNA. What horrible luck!

FRASER. I think we're lucky that he didn't come. We don't want any chaps around here with the grippe.

MRS. G. He is not a chap; he is a count.

FRASER. Well, it's just as catching in a count as in anybody else, I suppose?

EDNA. Alec, don't be brutal!

MRS. G. But what am I going to do? I haven't a thing to entertain them with except music.

EDNA. Maybe Alec will read one of his stories. Will you, dear?

FRASER. No, I will not.

MRS. G. (*grimly*). I said "entertain."

VIVIAN. I think he's a brute, not to have let you know before this. People always know for days ahead when they're going to have the grippe. It's disgusting.

(*Enter* ALICE, L. C.)

ALICE. Mr. Ramsay.

MRS. G. Oh, yes, I told Charles to come out for dinner. I wanted him to plan about the readings. I can't see him, now.

EDNA. You'd better come up-stairs with me, and let me bathe your head. Show Mr. Ramsay in, Alice. (*Exit* ALICE, L. C.) Come on, mamma, dear, I know just how you feel.

(*Exeunt* MRS. G. *and* EDNA, R.)

VIVIAN. I'll leave you to entertain Charles till tea time. I'm going to hunt up Paula and tell her about the Count. She's out in the garden somewhere.

(*Exit* VIVIAN, R.)

(*Enter* ALICE, L. C., *ushering in* CHARLES RAMSAY.)

ALICE. Mr. Ramsay.

(*Exit* ALICE, L. C.)

FRASER. Hello, Charles ——

RAMSAY. Hello. Where are the ladies?

FRASER. They have retired to their rooms in bitter despair. Charles, you come at an unfortunate time. A blight has settled upon this house.

RAMSAY. What do you mean? Nobody sick, I hope!

FRASER. Sick? It's worse than that.

RAMSAY. I say, don't be so blamed mysterious—there isn't anything the matter with Paula, is there?

FRASER. Paula is among the victims.

RAMSAY. Good gracious, what ——

FRASER. The Count has declined to come. The lawn fête is ruined.

RAMSAY (*dropping into chair*). Gosh!

FRASER. Behold the only pair of dry eyes in this afflicted house.

RAMSAY. What's the matter with the fellow? He agreed to come.

FRASER. Grippe.

RAMSAY. Too bad. Rather take the edge off the party, won't it? Does—does Paula—where did you say Paula is?

FRASER. I didn't say, but I believe she's out in the garden somewhere.

RAMSAY (*picking up his cap*). Guess I'll look her up—wanted to speak to her about something. (*Starts to go.*)

FRASER. You'll find Vivian with her.

RAMSAY (*dropping his cap and sitting again*). Might as well wait till she comes in, I guess. Say, Alec, I'm afraid I got myself into hot water with your mother-in-law.

FRASER. How?

RAMSAY. Brought a chap out here for dinner—got as far as the Country Club with him when it struck me I'd better find out whether they wanted him or not—so I left him at the club and came on to ask. You know him, Jim Barry—from Oklahoma—awfully nice chap ——

FRASER. I've met him. Didn't he just come into a lot of money?

RAMSAY. Yes. Rich old uncle died and left him a couple of millions. As a matter of fact, he saw Vivian at a dance a few weeks ago, and is awfully smitten on her. I promised to bring him out and introduce him.

FRASER. Vivian? The baby?

RAMSAY. Well, he doesn't think she's a baby. You forget that girls grow up.

FRASER. So that was what you wanted to see Paula about, eh?

RAMSAY (*guiltily*). Yes.

FRASER. I'm glad of that. I had an idea that it might be something else.

RAMSAY. I say, what are you driving at?

FRASER. I was beginning to fear that you were getting—well—a little smitten on Paula.

RAMSAY. Me? Oh, not at all, I assure you. Of course, I admire Paula tremendously ——

FRASER. And let me tell you, man to man, that it doesn't pay to get smitten on Paula. She's the greatest flirt in New York State.

RAMSAY. Oh, I say ——

FRASER. Oh, I know what I'm talking about. I've had the disease. It's as contagious as smallpox and twice as deadly.

RAMSAY. What cured you?

FRASER. Her younger sister.

RAMSAY. Oh!

FRASER. Take my advice, and keep away from Paula.

RAMSAY. You think she'd lead a chap on?

FRASER. Lead him on? You poor infant, if you've got to play with something dangerous, why don't you buy a stick of dynamite, tie a string to it, and bounce it on the pavement? Lead a chap on—oh, my hat! But don't let me keep you from Barry. You'd better run over to the club for him, hadn't you?

RAMSAY. You think Mrs. Gordon won't mind?

FRASER. Sure of it. He may help to lighten the gloom that's fallen upon us.

RAMSAY. It's a shame. If I wasn't so well known I'd dress up and play the part myself. I could fake the fortune-telling well enough, but everybody'd know me.

FRASER. The penalty one pays for excessive popularity.

RAMSAY. Oh, rot! Here I'm trying to help you out and you try to be funny. That's the worst of you artistic chaps—you never can take anything seriously.

FRASER. I admit that it's quite impossible for me to take the thought of you, Charles, dressed in Oriental robes, reading the palms of all the pretty girls in town, seriously—if that's what you mean ——

RAMSAY. I say,—here's an idea! Why not Jim? Let's get Jim Barry to do it! He's no end clever at that sort of thing; I saw him in a minstrel show last winter and he made a hit. Nobody knows him well enough to recognize him. The steward at the club has all the make-up stuff we used in the play last month.

FRASER. You mean to make the guests believe that they are having their palms read by Count Cashmere—don't, my boy, the temptation is too strong.

RAMSAY. Why not? The chap agreed to come—we'll send him a check, and that'll close his mouth—they'll never know. I'm going to propose it to Mrs. Gordon.

(*Starts to go* R. FRASER *stops him.*)

FRASER. Wait—I'll help you out on this—on one condition. (RAMSAY *stares at him.*) It's to be a dead secret between you and me—and, of course, Jim Barry. Not a word of it to Mrs. Gordon or the girls, until I get ready to spring the joke.

RAMSAY. What?

FRASER. Why not? It'll be the best joke of the season; and, Charles, it's so seldom a man has a chance to play a joke on his wife's family. Only think what a rich one it'll

be, too. They've been down on their knees to this fellow to get him to come, and they've snubbed me every time I opened my head about him. Come on, Charles, be a good fellow.

RAMSAY. Well, of course, if you put it like that—it would be a bit of a lark, wouldn't it?

FRASER. It'll be the larkiest lark this family has indulged in for some time, let me tell you, my son. (*Looks out of window.*) Here comes Paula—disappointment written on her face. Oh, this is going to be tremendous!

RAMSAY (*in alarm*). Paula coming here? What are you going to say to her?

FRASER. Don't you worry. Is your car outside?

RAMSAY. Yes.

FRASER. I am going over to the club to get the Count Cashmere. You shall stay here and explain to the ladies of the family that the Count's secretary has just telephoned that he did not have the grippe after all and will be down on the four o'clock express. I have gone to the depot to get him. Understand?

RAMSAY. Yes, but hadn't I better go? Paula'll get it out of me, as sure as day. Let me go.

FRASER. Nonsense. Don't let her get it out of you. Look her straight in the eye and tell yourself that you don't care a hang for her. That's the way to manage Paula. Good-bye, I'm off.

(*Exit* FRASER, R.)

RAMSAY. But wait a bit—— (*Enter* PAULA HARMON, L. C., *carrying her garden hat by its ribbons.*) Oh, hello, Paula!

PAULA (*coming down with outstretched hands*). Hello, Charlie, I'm awfully glad you came. Was it hot coming out?

RAMSAY (*a little embarrassed*). Not very. You look as cool as a cucumber.

PAULA (*sitting*). I'm not. I'm boiling with wrath. That miserable Count Cashmere has telephoned that he's not coming, and mamma's party will be completely spoiled. Men are the least dependable creatures in the world, I believe.

RAMSAY (*guiltily*). Oh, but he is coming. His secretary just telephoned that he did not have the grippe, and

would be down on the four o'clock train. Alec's gone to meet him.

PAULA (*jumping up*). Really, Charles? Oh, that's too good to be true. I must run and tell mamma right away.

(*Starts to go; he stops her.*)

RAMSAY. I say, Paula ——

PAULA. Well? What do you say?

RAMSAY. Don't go just yet.

PAULA. But I can't leave her mind in such a state ——

RAMSAY. Yes, you can, for a few minutes. I've got something I want to say to you.

PAULA. Yes?

RAMSAY (*crossing to her*). I don't care a hang for you —I don't care a hang ——

PAULA (*in amazement*). What?

RAMSAY. Oh, confound it, I knew it wouldn't work— he's a fool. Paula, I—I ——

PAULA (*kindly*). It would save a lot of time, Charles, if you would get the things you want to say clearly fixed in your mind before you tried to say them.

RAMSAY. That's just what's the trouble. It's so clearly fixed in my mind that there isn't room for anything else. I go around thinking about you till I make a perfect fool of myself.

PAULA. But you mustn't. I—I don't like you to be a fool. I'm very fond of you, Charles.

RAMSAY. Oh, hang it all, I knew you'd say that. I don't want you to be fond of me that way. Paula, I love you—I've loved you exactly—how long have you been a widow?

PAULA. Just five years.

RAMSAY. I have loved you exactly four years and six months, and ——

PAULA. I don't understand the fascination that seems to attach itself to a widow in the eyes of man.

RAMSAY. Paula, please be serious. I want you to marry me. Will you?

PAULA. Yes, I will—be serious, I mean; not marry you. I—I couldn't marry you, Charlie. You see, I've known you so long, and so well—why, I always know exactly what you're going to say and do, even before you know yourself. Of course, I like and admire you tremen-

dously. You're such a good fellow—and so honest. Why, you wouldn't deceive me in the smallest thing.

RAMSAY. Well, of course, I shouldn't want to, you know, but circumstances might arise ——

PAULA. No, they wouldn't—with you. That's why I like you so much.

RAMSAY. And yet you ——

PAULA. Oh, I know I'm inconsistent, but I can't help it. I want somebody who will—oh—carry me off my feet, sweep me away—all that sort of thing. You know, I married to please the family before, and now ——

(*Enter* VIVIAN, *running.*)

VIVIAN. Oh, Paula, I just met Alec, and he says the Count has changed his mind and has come down on the four o'clock train. Isn't it great?

PAULA. So Charles has just told me.

VIVIAN. Oh, hello, Charles, I didn't see you.

RAMSAY (*shortly, going up to window*). Hello!

VIVIAN (*to* PAULA). What's the matter with him? Have you been doing anything to him?

PAULA. Of course not. I think I shall go up and tell mamma that the Count is coming.

VIVIAN. You needn't; I've already told her. She is wild with excitement. Oh, what do you suppose he'll be like?

PAULA. I think he'll be tall and slender, with large, luminous black eyes.

RAMSAY. Nothing of the kind. He's short and rather stout ——

VIVIAN. Oh!

RAMSAY. With, possibly, a mustache, or a beard.

PAULA. Why, Charles, have you met him?

RAMSAY. No, not exactly, but they all look alike—these chaps.

VIVIAN. Well, I guess you'll find that he doesn't. He's a genuine count, and a perfect gentleman.

RAMSAY (*dryly*). Is he? Well, your mother had better lock up the silver, if that's the case.

PAULA. Charles, I think it's very narrow of you ——

(*Enter* MRS. G. *and* EDNA, R.)

MRS. G. Oh, girls, you've heard? My lawn fête is

saved. He's coming. Such a relief. Good-afternoon, Charles, so glad to see you.

EDNA. Alec has gone to meet the Count. It was so nice of him when he doesn't approve of palmistry at all.

(RAMSAY *goes up to window.*)

PAULA. We've been very fortunate—very.

RAMSAY. Here they come.

ALL. Where?

(*They all crowd around* RAMSAY *at window.*)

VIVIAN. He is short.

PAULA. But so good looking.

MRS. G. The dear man!

EDNA. Such an air—so—so distingué—so different.

RAMSAY (*maliciously*). Yes, not a bit like Alec, is he?

(*Comes down front.*)

PAULA (*coming down*). Now, you've hurt her feelings.

RAMSAY (*savagely*). Serves her right. What business has she—a married woman—to talk like that about a man just because he's a heathen and has a title? Bah, you make me tired.

PAULA. You have been making me tired for four years and six months, but I'm not rude about it.

VIVIAN. What a pretty suit-case—and just see all the labels on it.

MRS. G. He's laughing—so good-natured looking.

EDNA. I do hope Alec's not trying any of his jokes on him. He can be so exasperating at times.

RAMSAY. I'm sorry—I didn't mean to be rude—say, Paula, will you ——

PAULA. Oh, not now; do let's stop talking about each other till the lawn fête's over; it does seem to ruffle us so.

(*She lets him hold her hand a moment, then snatches it away as the others turn from the window and come down front.*)

MRS. G. (*seating herself majestically*). I hope, Charles, that you won't be disagreeable to our guest.

RAMSAY (*going up to window*). I hope not. I shan't if he behaves himself.

EDNA (*sitting*). Behaves himself!

(*Enter* ALEC *and* JAMES BARRY, *the latter disguised as the Count. The ladies rush to welcome him; he and* RAMSAY *exchange a sedate wink.*)

FRASER. Mamma, let me present the Count. My mother-in-law, Mrs. Gordon.

(*Checks* BARRY *in an obvious attempt to shake hands with* PAULA.)

MRS. G. I am delighted and honored to welcome such a distinguished guest.

BARRY (*rather overwhelmed*). Thanks. Hot, ain't it? Awful!

(*The women look at each other in amazement.*)

FRASER. My wife, and my sisters-in-law, Mrs. Harmon and Miss Gordon.

PAULA. So glad that you changed your mind, Count. We were looking upon our lawn fête as ruined, and you have saved us.

BARRY (*shaking hands all around, rather to their surprise*). Not at all—glad to come ——

EDNA. And your grippe—your secretary thought you had the grippe ——

BARRY (*surprised*). My secretary? Why ——

FRASER (*severely*). Your secretary telephoned that you had the grippe, you know. That's why we thought you weren't coming.

BARRY (*in confusion*). Oh, yes—my secretary, of course; he's an odd fellow, thinks I never ought to go anywhere—play the mysterious—don't you know? Now, I don't believe in that sort of thing, myself.

EDNA. That's exactly what Mr. Fraser always says; that the true artist is above such petty considerations; don't you, Alec?

FRASER. I dare say; I talk a lot of rot sometimes. (*To* BARRY.) Why the deuce don't you sit down?

BARRY (*sitting on sofa, down* L.). Mr. Fraser scribbles, I believe?

EDNA (*horrified*). Scribbles!

RAMSAY (*hurriedly, to her*). Never mind him—he

doesn't understand the—the subtleties of the English language. Writes—scribbles—it's all the same thing to him, don't you know? Ah, here comes tea.

(*Enter* ALICE, L. C., *with tray which she sets on the low table.* PAULA *seats herself at the table and prepares to serve tea.* *Exit* ALICE, R. VIVIAN *sits on sofa, other ladies on chairs.*)

MRS. G. Do have a cup of tea after your tiresome trip, Count. Ah, you see we know your favorite beverage. (BARRY *and* RAMSAY *exchange glances.*) I've heard how dreadfully severe you Orientals are on the subject of intoxicants. If only our young men would learn a lesson from you!

BARRY (*virtuously*). Yes, pity, ain't it? Nothing like tea—so harmless and cozy, eh? (*Takes cup from* PAULA.) No—no sugar; you looked into the cup, you know.

FRASER (*to* RAMSAY). Confound his impertinence—nice hash he's going to make of the whole affair. I should think you'd have had more sense than to ——

RAMSAY (*indignantly*). I? Did I drive to the club to get him, and insist upon his coming? I, indeed!

VIVIAN (*innocently*). Do they drink tea a great deal in the harem, Count?

BARRY (*aghast*). In the which?

VIVIAN. In the harem. Haven't you a harem? I thought they all had.

BARRY (*in horror*). Harem? Me? Good heavens!

RAMSAY (*scowling at him*). Not at all—perfectly natural—you're an East Indian, and she naturally supposes you've got half a dozen wives; they always do in books; why haven't you got 'em?

PAULA (*horrified*). Charles!

BARRY. Why, you see, Miss Raymond, I've never married because—why, you see, I ——

(*He gazes at her adoringly.*)

FRASER (*severely*). The Count has given himself absolutely to his art.

PAULA (*with a sigh*). How lovely!

FRASER (*aside to* VIVIAN, *as he leans over back of sofa*). You ought to be locked up in the nursery. The idea of ask-

ing a man if he's got a harem. Don't you ever do that again.

VIVIAN (*resentfully*). Well, I thought ——

FRASER. Little girls of eighteen have no business to think. It's the most dangerous thing they can possibly do.

(*Crosses to take the cups from* PAULA *and pass them.*)

VIVIAN (*aside, angrily*). Well, upon my word, the impertinence of people who go and marry into one's family ——

BARRY (*apparently in reply to a question of* MRS. G.'s). Oh, yes, indeed, the true palmist takes everything into consideration—the face, the manner, even the voice; everything has its story. For instance ——

MRS. G. } Yes, yes—for instance ——
EDNA. }

BARRY (*who is beginning to get into the part*). Take our friend, Fraser; I haven't seen his hand; I don't need to see it; his face, his voice, his manner, all proclaim that he is a man of genius, a man of temperament, a man of imagination.

(*Expressions of highest interest and approbation on the faces of the ladies, intense distrust and irritation on that of* FRASER; *amusement on that of* RAMSAY.)

EDNA. Oh, yes, indeed ——

BARRY. A man who lives utterly for his work, to whom the conventionalities of society are nothing, a man whom his art has made an absolutely selfish being, a man who would throw everything and everybody, yes, everybody to the dogs rather than let an iota of his precious work suffer—a man ——

(*He pauses out of breath; the ladies are overcome with his eloquence.* EDNA *puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

MRS. G. How true—how very true!

FRASER. Look here, that'll do. What do you mean by ——

EDNA. Alec, how can you speak so? Remember ——

FRASER. I won't remember. Am I to sit quietly here and let a ——

EDNA. Alec, I insist ——

BARRY. Now, Mr. Ramsay is quite a different sort of

person, I should say. Good-hearted, genial, frivolous, excessively fond of women ——

RAMSAY. What!

PAULA. Charles!

(*Enter* ALICE, R.)

ALICE. There's a man on the 'phone who wants Mr. James Barry, and he won't ring off.

(*Consternation among the conspirators.*)

PAULA. Mr. James Barry? Tell him there's no such person here.

ALICE. So I did, ma'am, but he says there is—he says he'll be hanged if there ain't—and he won't ring off.

MRS. G. Alice!

BARRY. Let me go—I'll speak to him.

ALL. You?

FRASER. Don't be an idiot—I'll see what he wants. Some mistake, of course.

(*Exeunt* ALICE *and* FRASER, R.)

MRS. G. How very annoying.

BARRY (*clutching* RAMSAY). I say, let me go; it's my broker, Roberts; I told him I was coming here, and asked him to call me up if C. and Q. went off. I must talk to him.

RAMSAY. You can't talk to him. I won't allow it. You'd ruin everything.

BARRY. But it means money; I've got to see him.

RAMSAY (*bitterly*). Two millions left you, and you can't do a simple thing like this for a friend. I'm ashamed of you.

BARRY. Oh, well, if you put it like that ——

RAMSAY. I do. You can call him when we're dressing for dinner. You can't desert us now. We sink or swim together.

PAULA. It's marvelous the way you read character, Count. What do my face, voice and manner suggest to you?

BARRY. Everything most pleasing to the eye and lovely to the mind.

PAULA. Oh!

RAMSAY (*aside*). Confound him.

(*Enter* FRASER.)

FRASER. A mistake—the wires were crossed.

MRS. G. Those girls are so careless.

BARRY (*to* PAULA). If you would allow me to glance at your hand——

PAULA (*eagerly*). Oh, I should love it!

(*He takes her hand, studies it, strokes it:*)

RAMSAY. I say, Paula, it's outrageous——

PAULA. Outrageous?

RAMSAY. Er—er—to set the Count to work the minute he gets here. Can't you let a man rest a minute?

BARRY. To study so beautiful and interesting a hand is rest. (*Continues to study hand.*)

RAMSAY (*aside to* FRASER). I say, how long is this thing going to last? Haven't you got enough joke out of it?

FRASER (*savagely*). Joke? If this is your idea of a joke, I must say I don't care for it.

RAMSAY. My idea!

FRASER. Yes, your idea. Didn't you suggest it? You can tell 'em as soon as you like, for all I care.

RAMSAY (*in horror*). Tell them? Great Scott, tell them that we've palmed off Jim Barry on them for the Count, and let them make idiots of themselves over him? Well, you can tell them if you like; I'd rather put my hand in the tiger's cage down at the Zoo.

FRASER. That's just like you, Charles; always ready to get into a thing and then throw the responsibility of getting out on the other fellow. Now, if you——

VIVIAN. Oh, Charles, the Count says that Paula is going to be married again!

RAMSAY. Marvelous penetration!

(*He surveys the group,* BARRY, *surrounded by the four ladies, with much disgust.*)

FRASER (*aside*). We might buy him off—induce him to go back to-night.

RAMSAY. Yes, I see you buying off a man with two millions—besides, he's beginning to enjoy himself, and to get even with us for roping him in.

VIVIAN (*to* BARRY). Oh—oh—oh, how awfully exciting! How many times do you think I'll be married?

FRASER (*to* RAMSAY). This is a nice business you've let us in for.

(*Enter* GERTRUDE, R.)

GERTRUDE. Mr. Fraser, Mr. Harrington has just telephoned to know whether you've forgotten that you and Mr. Ramsay had promised to dine with him this evening at the Country Club.

FRASER. Hang it, I'd forgotten entirely.

MRS. G. To-night? Why, you can't go to-night, when the Count is here.

BARRY. Don't mind me—the ladies will look after me—mustn't break any engagements on my account.

FRASER. I don't see how we can get out of it—we promised a week ago—I ——

RAMSAY. Harrington's such an old maid about his dinner invitations, too, but ——

PAULA. Why, go, of course, and come home early. We'll look after the Count, won't we, mamma?

RAMSAY. Yes, but ——

GERTRUDE. He's holding the wire.

FRASER. Oh, tell him we'll come.

(*Exit* GERTRUDE, R.)

BARRY. Another daughter?

EDNA. My husband's secretary, Miss Price.

MRS. G. A very worthy young person. (*Rises.*) I'm afraid, Count, that we must drag ourselves away from your fascinating science for a while, or dinner will be announced before we are dressed. Come, girls. (*All rise.*) Alec, I will leave you to show the Count to his room.

BARRY. A delightful afternoon, to be followed by a more delightful evening.

(*Exit* MRS. G., R., *followed by* PAULA *and* EDNA. VIVIAN *lingers.*)

VIVIAN. And you will read mine to-night?

BARRY (*relapsing*). You bet.

VIVIAN. You're a darling!

(*Exit* VIVIAN, R.)

FRASER (*approaching* BARRY, R.). Look here, this thing has got to stop.

RAMSAY (*coming up on the other side*). It's got to stop right now.

BARRY (*innocently*). Why? I thought it was going beautifully—except when you fellows muffed it.

FRASER. You don't understand. I mean that the joke has been carried far enough.

RAMSAY. We don't feel justified in carrying it any further.

BARRY. Oh, I see; well, I didn't think much of the idea myself when you proposed it, but you were dead set on it. I don't care, though; tell 'em any time you please.

RAMSAY. Tell them—you mean for us to do it?

BARRY. Well, you don't expect me to do it, do you?

FRASER. I don't see why you should mind doing it.

BARRY. Don't you? Well, I do.

RAMSAY. See here, Jim, they're nothing to you—I mean —you've got nothing to lose—hang it all, I mean ——

BARRY. You don't seem to have a very clear idea of what you do mean; but if you think you're going to get me to break the news for you, you've got another think coming; only I wish you'd hurry, as there's a train I can get out of here at eight. (*Pause.*)

FRASER. I suppose it would be a beastly shame to break up the lawn fête.

RAMSAY. Mrs. Gordon would never forgive us if we did.

BARRY. Better let it go through and 'fess up afterward. (*Aside.*) After I'm gone.

FRASER. But do you think you can carry it through?

RAMSAY. They've sent out a hundred invitations.

BARRY. I'm not getting stage fright. Suppose you two clear out and let me talk to my broker?

(*Enter* GERTRUDE, R.; *goes up* C., *hesitates whether to go out* L. C.)

FRASER. All right. The 'phone is in the library. Come along, Charles, we haven't much time.

RAMSAY. Sorry to leave you, old man, but you understand ——

BARRY. Oh, don't mind me. I'll do my telephoning and dress for dinner.

FRASER. Oh, by the way, your room is the third on left side of the hall.

(*Exeunt* FRASER *and* RAMSAY, R.)

BARRY. All right. (*Turns to cross* L. C.; *meets* GERTRUDE, *who comes down* R.) Oh, Miss Price ——

GERTRUDE. I beg your pardon, I thought you had gone with them. I just came in to run off a couple of pages on the machine.

BARRY. Don't let me disturb you; I'm going to the library to telephone. (*Crosses* L.; *she goes to machine and sits.*) I say, where is the library, anyhow?

GERTRUDE. You're heading for it now; just keep on.

(*Puts the paper in the typewriter; begins to write.*)

BARRY (*coming back*). Oh, the library'll keep. (*Watches her with admiration.*) I say, how fast you go, don't you?

GERTRUDE. I'm considered rather a rapid operator, I believe.

(*Continues to strike the keys without looking at him.*)

BARRY (*quite unabashed*). I don't see how you do it.

GERTRUDE (*coolly, and without stopping*). Don't you?

BARRY (*sitting in armchair near her and turning up his coat collar*). There's a draught here somewhere. Feel it?

GERTRUDE (*working*). Can't say I do.

BARRY (*watching her fingers*). Do you mind if I smoke?

GERTRUDE. Not in the least. I shall be going in a moment.

BARRY. Don't let me drive you away. I can think just as well when you're here as when you're not. (*She glares at him; goes on working. He lights a cigarette.*) I wonder if you couldn't give me a pointer or two on the neighborhood?

GERTRUDE (*stopping*). What in the world do you mean?

BARRY. Thanks for this kind attention. (*She starts the machine again.*) You know I'm here to tell fortunes, read palms, that sort of thing?

GERTRUDE (*taking out a sheet and inserting another*). So I've heard. I don't believe in 'em myself.

BARRY. Am I to understand that you think me an impostor?

GERTRUDE. You're to understand that I don't think of you at all.

BARRY. Ahem!

GERTRUDE. I thought you were going to telephone?

BARRY. I am, as soon as we finish this interesting conversation. As I was saying, I'm down here to amuse the crowd to-morrow, with a sort of dress rehearsal to-night, see?

GERTRUDE. Um-hum!

BARRY. I was about to say that if you could give me a few particulars in regard to the family and some of their friends, I'd make it worth your while. You see, I haven't been very well, lately, and some of my psychic power has—well—evaporated. You can tell from this ring, a very old stone, came from Egypt; when I'm all right, it's as blue as—well—as your eyes, but when I'm not quite up to the mark it has this green streak in it. See? (*Shows her a large ring that he wears on his little finger.*) Of course, I don't really need your help—I could work it out for myself; but it's just as well to save your gray matter, when you can, don't you think so?

(*Enter* ALICE, R., *to get the tea things.*)

GERTRUDE (*rising*). Yes. A good many of us haven't any to spare. Alice, this gentleman wants to know—where the telephone is. Will you take him to the library? (*Pauses.* ALICE *starts to go* R. BARRY *looks at* GERTRUDE *in surprise.*) Sorry I can't give you that information. You might ask Alice.

ALICE. This way, sir.

(*Exit* ALICE, R., *with tray.*)

BARRY (*rising*). Thanks awfully. Don't forget me, will you?

GERTRUDE. Well, of all the ——

BARRY. Ta-ta.

(*Exit* BARRY, R.)

GERTRUDE (*staring after him*). Of all the nerve! And they call him a count! Count Humbug, that's what he is. I've seen his kind before. Information about the family, indeed! I only hope that's all he wanted. He looks to me

as though he might be after the silver. (*Pause.*) My goodness, I wonder if he—they said the Count telephoned once that he couldn't come—he's one of those new style burglars, I'll bet a dollar; one of the kind that comes around in automobiles and cleans out the house while the family are at dinner. (*An auto is heard tooting.*) There go the men, now, and here we are, a pack of women left to face that ruffian. I'll just find out before I do another thing—I'll hear him telephone—and if he's what I think he is, we'll see —— (*Starts to go off* R., *but pauses.*) I guess I'll make you think before long that there's a draught somewhere, my fresh young man!

(*Exit* GERTRUDE, R.)

(*Enter* EDNA, R., *in a dinner gown; she goes to window, stands there waving her hand. Turns and comes down front. Auto toots faintly.*)

EDNA. I hope they won't stay too late. I am determined that the Count shall read Alec's hand this evening. (*Stops before the typewriter machine.*) She's been at work again. Well, one can't deny that she is painstaking. I wonder if I could —— (*She smiles, looks toward the door, then sits before the machine and prepares to write.*) I don't believe it's so very hard. I wish I could learn. Let's see. (*She picks out each key with great difficulty, spelling as she goes along.*) My dear Alec, how very much surprised you will be—now where's that "e"? I believe they've hidden it on purpose—when ——

(*Enter* GERTRUDE, R. *She runs up to* EDNA *suddenly;* EDNA *jumps up with a scream.*)

GERTRUDE (*intensely*). Hush! Not a word!

EDNA. You've scared me nearly to death. What is the matter?

GERTRUDE (*looking about fearfully*). Something awful has happened.

EDNA. Oh, what—it can't be Alec—he's just gone—don't stand there like a ghost and frighten me—tell me this instant.

GERTRUDE (*in an awful tone*). There's a robber in the house.

EDNA (*with a scream*). A robber! Where?

GERTRUDE (*stopping her mouth with her hand*). Hush, he'll hear you. He's gone up-stairs.

EDNA. Up-stairs? Oh, and mamma and the girls are up-stairs. Oh, what shall I do? Where did you see him?

GERTRUDE. Listen. It's that fortune-telling fellow that came this afternoon.

EDNA. The Count? Why, Gertrude, it can't be. What do you mean by saying such a thing about a gentleman?

GERTRUDE. Oh, don't you worry about him. I've got him sized up all right. He's no more count than I am. He came in here a few minutes ago when you were up stairs, and tried to talk to me—wanted me to give him some particulars about the family and their friends to help him along—said he'd make it worth my while.

EDNA. Oh!

GERTRUDE. I had my suspicions of him then; but I wasn't sure till I heard him telephone to his accomplice. They call them "fences." They dispose of the plunder—you know.

EDNA. Oh, Gertrude!

GERTRUDE. I stood outside the library door and listened. I couldn't hear all he said, but I heard ——

EDNA. Yes, yes.

GERTRUDE. He said, "This is Jim. I want you to sell all that silver stuff for me, right away; I've got a big scheme on, but I can't tell you over this wire. I'll see you to-morrow." Isn't that plain enough for you? Who ever heard of a count named "Jim"?

EDNA. Oh, Gertrude, how brave you've been! You've saved us all—that is, if we're saved. Oh, what can we do? There's not a man in the house!

(*Wrings her hands wildly.*)

GERTRUDE. Telephone to the Country Club and have them send Mr. Fraser and Mr. Ramsay back the moment they arrive.

EDNA (*clinging to her*). Yes, yes, and what then?

GERTRUDE. Don't let him know that you suspect him. Keep him here till they come.

EDNA. Here!

GERTRUDE. Of course. You don't want him to get away, do you?

EDNA. Of course I do—no—we must save mamma's sil-

ver—and my jewels—oh, what shall I do? Gertrude, you must go and telephone—I wouldn't cross that hall for a thousand dollars.

GERTRUDE. All right, I'll go. If he comes while I'm gone don't let him see that anything's wrong.

(*Starts to go, but* EDNA *holds her.*)

EDNA. If he comes—but I can't talk to him alone. I ——

GERTRUDE (*pulling away from her*). Oh, yes, you can. I won't be a minute. Remember.

(*Exit,* R.)

EDNA (*coming down front with her hands over her ears*). Oh, if I only had iron nerves like that girl! And to think that only this morning I wanted to get rid of her. What a wicked woman I've been. This must be a punishment. Oh, what shall I do if he comes? I can't be natural—I know I can't—I —— (*Enter* VIVIAN, R., *suddenly. Runs up to* EDNA, *who screams.* PAULA *appears in doorway* R. *Both in dinner gowns.*) Oh!

VIVIAN. Why, Edna, what in the world is the matter?

EDNA. Oh! (*Relieved, seeing them both.*) Girls, come here. Something horrible has happened.

(*They come down front.*)

BOTH. Oh, what?

VIVIAN. Edna, you make my flesh creep.

PAULA. What can have happened?

EDNA (*in blood-curdling tones*). The Count is an impostor!

BOTH. What!

EDNA. Hush! Don't ask any questions, he may come in any moment. Gertrude found him out—she heard him telephoning to his accomplice—she called him a—a gate—I think it was.

BOTH (*in horror*). Oh, how awful!

EDNA. He's planning to steal all mamma's silver and sell it—Gertrude says it's not the Count at all—he tried to bribe her to show him where things were ——

PAULA. The monster!

EDNA. Gertrude's gone to telephone to the club for Alec,

and she says if he comes here we must hold him till Alec gets here.

VIVIAN. Hold him!

EDNA. Yes, keep him busy talking—anything —— (*Enter* GERTRUDE, R.) Oh, there she is—did you get them —had they gotten there ——

GERTRUDE (*melodramatically*). The wire to the Country Club is down!

ALL. Oh!

EDNA. We're lost! Oh, if I only hadn't been cross to Alec this morning! (*She sinks into chair and cries.*)

PAULA. We must telephone the police.

GERTRUDE (*disdainfully*). What's the good of them? We'll all be murdered in cold blood before they get here. (VIVIAN *groans and hides her face in* EDNA'S *lap.*) I'll tell you—I'll walk to the club and get Mr. Fraser. I can do it in twenty minutes and we can come back in the car in five.

PAULA. Oh, Gertrude, can you do it? We'll keep him here—we'll put dinner off half an hour—and ——

EDNA (*looking up*). Gertrude, do you think you could?

GERTRUDE. Sure. Keep up your courage and we'll land the wretch in jail yet.

(*Exit* L. C., *in haste.*)

EDNA (*resentfully*). I believe she's enjoying it. Oh, Paula, you'll have to talk to him. I know I shall scream if he looks at me.

PAULA. We mustn't let mamma suspect; she'd be frightened to death.

VIVIAN. And he seemed so nice!

PAULA. Nice!

EDNA (*rising*). I didn't think he was nice. I noticed the first thing that he had a shifty eye.

VIVIAN. I wonder if he ——

PAULA. Hush! (*They both jump to her side in terror.*)

BOTH. Oh, what?

PAULA. I thought I heard him coming. (*Pause.*) It —it must have been mamma. Girls, we must control ourselves—we must not frighten mamma—if she gets hold of the idea that there's anything wrong, she'll let him see it right off, and he'll probably murder us all in cold blood.

BOTH. Oh!

PAULA. We must do something—something natural—so that when she comes in we won't look so scared. I'll tell you—we'll tip the table.

VIVIAN. That's not natural. She never saw us tip a table in her life.

PAULA. Oh, very well, Miss Clever, suppose you suggest something yourself.

VIVIAN. I say that we throw ourselves upon his mercy and beg him to take the silver and spare our lives.

EDNA. You little coward! Give him our silver? Never.

VIVIAN. Oh, very well, if you want to be tortured and have your feet held in fire to make you tell the combination of the safe, and your throat cut ——

EDNA. Make her stop—I can't stand it—let's call him down and give him everything—I won't have my feet held in the fire ——

PAULA. Stop being such a fool—they don't do such things nowadays—they ——

VIVIAN. Oh, don't they? I read in the paper the other day about a woman who had all her teeth pulled out by burglars because she wouldn't tell where her money was.

EDNA (*holding her jaw with both hands*). Oh!

(*Enter* BARRY *at* R., *in evening dress.*)

BARRY. Great Scott! What's the matter?

(*They all jump;* EDNA *sinks into the chair, burying her face in the cushions;* PAULA *shrinks back, speechless;* VIVIAN *faces him, terrified.*)

VIVIAN. She—she—why—she's got the toothache.

BARRY. That's too bad—ain't there something she can do for it—let me telephone Fraser. (*He starts to go toward the library, but the moment* EDNA *sees him coming near her, she gives another piercing shriek. He recoils in astonishment.*) Gosh! It must hurt like the mischief.

VIVIAN (*tremblingly*). It does. She has awful teeth—awful!

EDNA (*angrily*). Oh!

BARRY. She's got it again. Let's do something to take her mind off it. Let's see ——

VIVIAN. Yes?

BARRY. I've got it—a dance. Let me show you one of our Indian dances. Quite the rage just now. Doctors pronounce them most soothing to the nerves.

EDNA (*tragically*). Soothing!

PAULA (*quickly*). That will be just the thing. Do show us, Count.

BARRY. Well, you begin like this. (*Takes a few steps.*) But we haven't any music. Let me see. Here. (*Takes a silver ash-tray from the table, and a paper-cutter; hands them to* PAULA.) You beat these—sort of tom-tom effect—slow and with dignity.

PAULA (*aside*). Oh, won't I make you suffer for this, you—you fraud! (*Hammers wildly on the ash-tray.*)

BARRY. That's the idea—that's truly Indian; now, come on, girls. (*Takes* EDNA *and* VIVIAN *by the hands.*) Now, watch me—that's it—don't stop pounding.

(*He dances—at first slowly, then faster and more furiously, they, frightened to death, following his every movement, and* PAULA *beating furiously on the ash-tray. Enter* MRS. G., *also in a dinner gown; she pauses and surveys the party through her lorgnon.*)

MRS. G. What an extraordinary ——

VIVIAN. Come on, mamma, the Count is teaching us such a beautiful Indian dance.

MRS. G. Charming—oh, lovely! Do let me learn, too.

BARRY. Fine—now the other foot—that's it—now altogether. (MRS. G. *begins to dance cumbersomely in a corner, watching* BARRY *with fascinated gaze.*) Great—simply great—come on—all of you—one, two, three ——

(*Enter* FRASER, RAMSAY *and* GERTRUDE *at* L. C.)

GERTRUDE. Oh, are we too late?

FRASER. Here—what's the row—stop that racket.

EDNA (*running to him*). Oh, Alec, we thought you'd never come!

(VIVIAN *and* PAULA *cling together;* MRS. G. *continues dancing as though hypnotized.*)

MRS. G. Beautiful! One, two, three ——

(RAMSAY *and* FRASER *seize* BARRY *and get him down;* PAULA *and* VIVIAN *run to* MRS. G., *who stops with a shriek;*

EDNA *and* GERTRUDE *hover in the background.* BARRY *struggles wildly.*)

BARRY. Here, quit that—it's gone far enough—what do you want? Confound it, you're breaking my leg.

MRS. G. Alec—Charles—I insist.

RAMSAY (*pinning* BARRY *down*). You would, would you? Villain! Terrorizing four helpless women. Contemptible ruffian!

BARRY. Terrorizing—oh, what in thunder —— (*Kicks out wildly.*) There, you will sit on my leg, will you?

PAULA. Charles, be careful. He's a desperate man. Don't let him bite you.

MRS. G. Bite? The Count? Oh!

GERTRUDE. Count? Him? He's nothing but a common burglar.

BARRY. Burglar!

MRS. G. Burglar! Oh, this is dreadful!

FRASER. Get me the curtain ropes, somebody.

(PAULA *runs and takes the rope from the portières.*)

BARRY. I say, fellow, what the ——

EDNA. Don't let him swear—I won't stand it.

RAMSAY (*gagging* BARRY *with a handkerchief, while* FRASER *ties him with the ropes*). He won't swear—don't worry.

GERTRUDE. What are you going to do with him?

FRASER (*standing up and mopping his forehead*). Chuck him into the automobile and have Williams drive him to the police station.

VIVIAN (*with sudden pity*). Oh, no.

PAULA. Oh, he's got a regular jailbird's face. Don't waste any sympathy on him. (*Violent attempt of* BARRY'S *to struggle as they pick him up.*) That's it—take his head —I'll take his feet.

VIVIAN. Oh, don't drop him—he was nice—I don't care if he was a burglar!

PAULA. Hush!

BARRY (*trying violently to speak*). I—I—oh—oh ——

EDNA (*as they go out*). You won't leave us, Alec?

FRASER. My dear, after this awful experience? Of course not. I'll 'phone to Harrington. (*Stops.*) By the way, there's a friend of ours out in the car, Mr. Barry, Mr.

Jim Barry, who insisted upon coming over with us in case we needed help. Would you mind if we brought him in to dinner?

(BARRY'S *struggles cease instantly. He turns his head and listens intently.*)

EDNA. Of course not.

RAMSAY (*aside to* BARRY). Kick a little, you woodenhead, can't you?

(BARRY *resumes his struggles and is carried off* L. C. *by* RAMSAY *and* FRASER.)

MRS. G. (*collapsing into the armchair,* EDNA *fanning her*). I do think they might have waited till after my lawn fête!

EDNA. And let us all be murdered in our beds? (*To* GERTRUDE.) If it hadn't been for you, you splendid girl, Alec might have returned to find me weltering in my gore.

GERTRUDE (*modestly*). There was something about him that I distrusted from the very first.

PAULA. It was his eye. He had a villainous eye.

GERTRUDE. No, I rather think it was his voice.

VIVIAN. Well, I don't care—I liked his voice, and his eye, and everything about him; and I don't care a snap to meet Mr. Jim Barry—I don't care if he is a millionaire!

(*Stamps her foot angrily and leaves the room,* L. C.)

MRS. G. (*recovering*). A millionaire? What is the child talking about?

EDNA. Mr. Jim Barry? Why, haven't you heard of him? He's the latest millionaire from the West. It's awfully reckless of Charles to bring him down here.

(*Goes up stage to the window, followed by* GERTRUDE.)

MRS. G. (*rising*). A millionaire—coming here to dinner? Vivian must come down at once. And I must interview cook.

(*Exit,* L. C.)

(*Enter* RAMSAY, L. C. PAULA *runs to him.*)

PAULA. Have they taken him away?

RAMSAY (*glancing at the other two, who are looking out of the window, and putting his arm around* PAULA). They have, dearest; be calm.

PAULA. I can't. Oh, Charlie, if you only knew what we've been through! And what I suffered seeing you struggling with that brute! How brave you are!

(*Puts her head on his shoulder.*)

RAMSAY. My darling girl, not at all. It was nothing.

PAULA. Nothing? But I saw you. You were like an armed paladin. To think that I've known you all these years and never suspected what a hero you were!

RAMSAY (*nervously*). Yes, wasn't it odd?

(*Enter* VIVIAN, L. C., *sulkily.*)

VIVIAN. Well, has he come?

EDNA. Somebody just came in a moment ago.

(*Enter* FRASER *and* BARRY, L. C.; *the latter has removed disguise, and stands forth a very presentable young man, still in evening dress.*)

FRASER. Ladies, allow me to present our friend, Mr. James Barry, late of Oklahoma.

BARRY (*bowing ceremoniously*). Delighted.

FRASER (*presenting them*). My wife, Barry; her sisters, Mrs. Harmon and Miss Gordon; and my secretary, Miss Price.

EDNA (*effusively*). So good of you to come to our rescue, Mr. Barry. We've had such a frightful evening.

PAULA (*cordially*). And we're always delighted to meet any friend of Charlie's.

VIVIAN (*turning away coolly*). How de do?

GERTRUDE (*shaking hands*). Mr. Barry. (*With a shriek.*) Oh!

ALL. What's the matter?

BARRY. Another tooth!

GERTRUDE (*pointing to* BARRY'S *hand*). That ring—it's the one that villain wore ——

BARRY. The deuce!

FRASER. Stolen property—I took it away from him myself and gave it to ——

(*Enter* ALICE, R.)

ALICE. That there man wants Mr. Jim Barry again on the 'phone.

BARRY (*anxious to escape*). That's me. I'll go at once. Tell him ——

GERTRUDE. Hadn't you better tell him the truth—Count Cashmere?

PAULA. Count Cashmere! Oh, Gertrude, what do you mean?

GERTRUDE (*triumphantly*). I knew I'd never forget that voice. Shall I 'phone for the police?

BARRY. Game's up, boys. You can't fool that one.

EDNA (*severely*). Alec, what does this mean?

FRASER. Why, the fact is—I—why —— Charles, what does this mean?

RAMSAY. Why, you see—why, it's quite simple—why —— Barry, what does it mean?

BARRY. Why, we—you see, Charles ——

PAULA. Tell the truth, please.

GERTRUDE. If you can.

BARRY. Well, the truth is this (RAMSAY *and* FRASER *go up stage in despair*): Charles brought me down to introduce me to the family, because I was very anxious to meet Miss Gordon.

PAULA. } Vivian!
EDNA. }

BARRY. I'd seen her at a dance and I—well—I couldn't rest till I'd met her. When we got down here everybody was nearly crazy because Count Somebody or other hadn't turned up to tell fortunes, and Fraser badgered the life out of me to dress up and pretend to be the man. He said he wouldn't introduce me to his family unless I did. He said he wanted to discipline 'em all for being such fools over a fake palmist.

ALL THE GIRLS. Oh!

(*Groans from the two men in the background.*)

BARRY (*continuing maliciously*). They went back on me the minute I began to get into the part; and when that young lady over there (*pointing to* GERTRUDE) made up her mind that I was a burglar, they thought it was a good time to break up the show. That's all.

VIVIAN. Then you weren't a ——

(*She stops in confusion.*)

BARRY. A burglar? Well, hardly; if I have a jailbird face.

PAULA. Oh!

GERTRUDE (*defiantly*). Well, all I can say is that a millionaire ought to act like a millionaire, and not like a ——

ALICE (*who has been standing open-mouthed in the doorway*). Any message to the person holding the wire?

BARRY. Yes. Tell him to ring off. I'm busy.

(*Exit* ALICE, R.; BARRY *goes to* VIVIAN, C.)

EDNA. And as for you, Alec ——

FRASER (*taking* EDNA *by one arm and* GERTRUDE *by the other and walking them up and down* L., *trying wildly to explain*). My dear, I can explain—it was all Charles' fault—it ——

PAULA (*to* RAMSAY). And I thought you the soul of honor!

RAMSAY (*following her up and down* R.). Oh, don't say that, Paula—if you'd only been satisfied with me the way I was instead of putting all sorts of wild ideas into my head ——

BARRY (*to* VIVIAN, *down* C.). Aren't you going to forgive me for playing that stupid joke on you? I only did it to oblige them.

VIVIAN (*relentingly*). If I thought that you really meant what you said about coming down here just to meet me ——

BARRY (*eagerly*). Every word, upon my honor! Look here, you didn't think I was a thief, did you?

VIVIAN (*loftily*). I? Of course not. I wasn't the least bit frightened. I knew you were too nice to be either a count or a burglar.

BARRY. You're a darling! (*They go up* R. C.)

PAULA (*stopping down* R.). I'll never forgive that dance—never!

RAMSAY. You'd better—for Vivian's sake. He's worth a cool two millions.

EDNA (*down* L., *to* FRASER). And you promise to do anything I want you to?

FRASER (*humbly*). Yes—anything. Honest, I will.

EDNA. Well—I guess I'll forgive you. But what about mamma?

PAULA. Yes, that's the point. Who's going to explain this to mamma ?

BARRY. Let me do it !

ALL. You !

BARRY. Sure, I'm tough. And after all, I got you into the scrape.

RAMSAY. Look here—the main thing is to save the garden party, isn't it ? The Count is out of it. But why not Jim for the part, after all ?

BARRY. Sure. I'm game.

VIVIAN. And we can tell you all about the people beforehand. (*Claps hands.*) Oh, say, I guess we won't scare the life out of some of them.

PAULA (*to* RAMSAY). Well, you do have ideas, don't you ?

RAMSAY (*looking at her affectionately*). I have only one idea, Paula—only one !

GERTRUDE. Here comes Mrs. Gordon !

BARRY. Leave her to me.

(*Enter* MRS. G., *much flurried, at* L. C.)

MRS. G. Well, at last I've persuaded cook —— (*Sees* BARRY.) Oh !

VIVIAN. Mamma, dear, let me present Charlie's friend, Mr. James Barry.

BARRY. Delighted. (*Aside to* VIVIAN.) Why not Jim ?

VIVIAN (*giggling*). My, but you are swift.

MRS. G. He's just in time for my lawn fête !

FRASER. In time for it ! He's the whole show !

BARRY MRS. G.

ALICE VIVIAN GERTRUDE

PAULA EDNA

RAMSAY FRASER

CURTAIN

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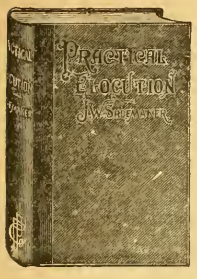

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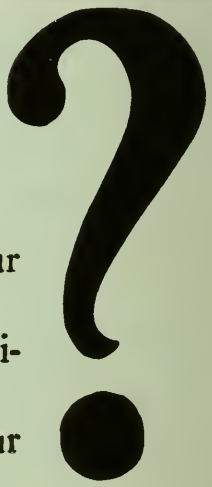

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